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Letter dated 8 April 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to send you the report of the workshop for newly elected and present Security Council members, which was held on 19 and 20 November 2009 at the Arrowwood Conference Center (see annex). The final report has been compiled in accordance with the Chatham House rules under the sole responsibility of the Permanent Mission of Finland.

On the basis of the very positive feedback we have received each year from the participants, the Government of Finland remains committed to sponsoring the workshop as an annual event. The Government of Finland hopes that this report will not only help to familiarize newly elected members with the working methods and procedures of the Council, but also will contribute to a better understanding among the wider United Nations membership of the complexity of the work of the Council.

I should be grateful, accordingly, if this report could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jarmo **Viinanen**
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 8 April 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

"Hitting the Ground Running": Seventh Annual Workshop for Newly Elected Members of the Security Council

19 and 20 November 2009
Arrowwood Conference Center
Rye Brook, New York

The Government of Finland — in cooperation with the Center on International Organization of Columbia University, the Security Council Affairs Division of the United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) — convened the seventh annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Security Council on 19 and 20 November 2009.

The annual workshops have served to help familiarize the newly elected members with the practice, procedure, and working methods of the Council so that they are in a position to "hit the ground running" when they join the Council the following January. The series has also provided current members of the Council with an opportunity to reflect on their work in an informal setting. The workshops have been designed to complement the annual UNITAR briefings on aspects of the Council's work.

This year, the opening evening featured remarks by Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

The full-day programme on 20 November included four round-table sessions which focused on the following themes:

I. State of the Council 2009: taking stock and looking ahead

II. Working methods

III. Security Council missions, committees and working groups

IV. Lessons learned: reflections of the class of 2009

Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, delivered the keynote address at the opening dinner. He began his remarks by thanking the Finnish delegation for convening the seventh annual workshop for newly elected members of the Security Council, as well as the Center on International Organization of Columbia University, the Security Council Affairs Division, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for their support of the event. After congratulating the incoming members of the Security Council — Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria — he suggested that the title of the event, "Hitting the Ground Running", was an understatement, as new Council members had to "hit the ground sprinting" given the quantity and complexity of the issues before the Council.

Quoting the background paper prepared for the workshop by Professor Edward Luck of Columbia University, the Chef de Cabinet observed that the Security Council does indeed have "a well earned reputation as the busiest and most productive inter-governmental organ in the United Nations system". He noted that it

is being called upon to address more challenges in more places than ever before. Since today's global challenges cannot be solved by any single nation acting alone, the Security Council has come to embody what the Secretary-General has called "renewed multilateralism". Increasingly, publics have come to associate the Security Council with the world body. According to the Chef de Cabinet, people expect the Council to recognize their needs, to understand the root causes of the problems facing them, and to respond promptly and effectively to their emergencies. When crises occur, people in need have little patience for debate or delay. They want the Council to act. While genuine differences of opinion can be obstacles to a timely response, it should be understood that the more the delay, the more the misery on the ground.

The workshop, in the Chef de Cabinet's view, was therefore about making the Council work better. It would provide participants with the opportunity to delve deeply into several core themes: a stocktaking of the Council; an examination of its working methods; a look at its missions, committees and working groups; and a reflection on lessons learned by outgoing members.

The relationship between the Secretariat and the Security Council, noted the Chef de Cabinet, is a particularly critical one in the United Nations system, encompassing both many direct interactions at Headquarters and, increasingly, the Secretariat's implementation of Council-approved mandates in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. In Afghanistan, the focus had first been on political stabilization, and then on supporting free and fair elections. Now, while earlier priorities had not gone away, the question of staff security in Afghanistan had become the issue of primary concern, since the United Nations was being targeted not for what it did, but for what it was.

According to the Chef de Cabinet, the incoming members of the Council are likely to face several key challenges in the upcoming months. Among these, he suggested, would be the renewal of the mandate for the United Nations Mission in Nepal in January 2010 under "complicated circumstances", the expiration of the mandate for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the likely postponement of the elections in that country, the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the challenge of endemic violence against the civilian population in that country, and major political developments in the Sudan as the country prepared for the elections and referendum in 2010 and 2011, respectively, and their impact on the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The Chef de Cabinet identified four areas in which cooperation between the Council and the Secretariat could be strengthened. The first involved the informal interactions between Council members and the Secretariat, such as consultations of various kinds, bilateral meetings with the Secretary-General and other senior staff, "informal interactive discussions", and the Secretary-General's monthly luncheons with the Council. These could be very useful in conveying information on issues not on the Council's agenda. As an example, he referred to the luncheon in October 2009 at which the Secretary-General briefed Council members on events in Guinea, highlighting a request from the African Union and ECOWAS to establish an independent commission of investigation. Many Council members expressed their support for the establishment of such a commission, which was formed and later

endorsed through a Security Council presidential statement. This is one of the best mechanisms, noted the Chef de Cabinet, for getting the Council more involved in early conflict prevention initiatives before situations deteriorate and a peacekeeping mission is required. He emphasized, in that regard, that the effectiveness of the good offices of the Secretary-General could be enhanced by the support of the Security Council, particularly when it was united behind his good offices.

The second area highlighted by the Chef de Cabinet was formal and informal reports and letters. The Secretariat, he observed, should tell the Council what it needs to know, rather than what it wants to hear. The Secretariat should provide the Council with honest and objective information on crucial peace and security issues, whether or not they are on the Council's agenda. Though acknowledging that the Secretariat is occasionally late with its reporting, as a result of the multiple layers of review and approval that reports undergo before being issued, he asserted that it was doing its best to become more disciplined in meeting reporting deadlines established by the Council.

The third area of interaction addressed was the Secretariat's role in directly implementing the mandates of the Council. In terms of peacekeeping operations, the Chef de Cabinet noted that sometimes mandates were a result of such delicate political compromises that they proved impossible to implement on the ground, because of unrealistic goals, a lack of resources, or both. To address this challenge, he suggested that the Secretariat be engaged in helping the Council to design mandates at an early stage, facilitating a common understanding of the purpose and the resources required for mandate implementation. In any case, the Secretariat would continue to work with the Council to ensure that mandates had a clear political strategy for a resolution of the conflict, that they allowed for rapid deployment, and that they were adequately resourced.

The fourth and final area of interaction was the monitoring of sanctions regimes. To support these efforts, the Council had been innovative in establishing groups of experts, which the Secretariat helped to identify, outfit and support by providing information and making recommendations that would otherwise be lacking. Those groups had made an important contribution to the work of the Council. Though the independent nature of those groups sometimes led to recommendations that were challenging for the Council to implement, either for political reasons or because of a lack of capacity, the Chef de Cabinet nonetheless encouraged the Council to carefully consider and implement, where possible, the relevant recommendations.

In the view of the Chef de Cabinet, the relationship between the Secretary-General and the Security Council rests on three pillars. The first pillar is defined by Articles 97 and 99 of the Charter of the United Nations. Article 97 specifies his role as the United Nations chief administrative officer, while Article 99 describes his political role vis-à-vis the Security Council. Each Secretary-General's relationship with the Security Council is defined, in large part, by how he interprets those functions, which should be undertaken with a balanced understanding of the possibilities and limits of his responsibilities. Impartiality and independence are the key elements of the second pillar. Impartiality, however, should not be equated with neutrality, he stressed. While the level of visibility of the Secretary-General varies from issue to issue and the division of labour with the Council was never static, the Security Council ultimately must own its decisions. With regard to the third pillar,

commented the Chef de Cabinet, the Secretary-General can assist the Council in working towards unity of purpose if an effort is made within the Council to strive towards common goals, regardless of the national position of each Council member. The Secretary-General's efforts in Myanmar and Sri Lanka were cited as examples. After developing a position that reflected the expectations of the Council and the international community, he undertook negotiations with the leadership of those countries. While his efforts were criticized in some quarters of the media, he believed that they reflected a commonality of goals and purpose within the Council.

In conclusion, the Chef de Cabinet reminded the incoming members that serving on the Council would afford them the privilege of thinking on a big scale, beyond the interests of their countries and regions. The Council considers not just issues of peace but also related questions of justice, human rights, and international humanitarian law. Over the years, moreover, the Council has expanded its focus beyond country-specific agenda items, to address cross-cutting themes, such as the protection of civilians, children in armed conflict, and women and peace and security. The Chef de Cabinet encouraged the newly elected members to look at their role in the Council through the widest possible lens, while being guided by the Charter as a fixed compass point.

Session I
State of the Council 2009: taking stock and looking ahead

Moderator:

Ambassador Vitaly Churkin
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation

Commentators:

Ambassador Ruhakana Rugunda
Permanent Representative of Uganda

Ambassador Alejandro Wolff
Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States

Session I provided an opportunity for Council members to reflect on the current state of the Council's work and to look forward to the challenges that it will face in the upcoming months and years. The session focused on trends in the Council's agenda, workload and productivity; the growth and evolution of peacekeeping mandates and operations; cooperation with regional and subregional arrangements; and other vital issues on the Council's agenda.

Trends in the Council's agenda, workload and productivity

At the opening session, there was substantial discussion of the background paper prepared for the workshop by Professor Edward Luck of Columbia University. It had provided statistics suggesting a downturn in Council activity and output, as measured by the number of formal meetings, informal consultations, resolutions, and presidential statements. The paper commented that this might well be a healthy and encouraging trend for a body that was widely regarded as the most productive in the United Nations system and that had been working at a frenetic pace. Nevertheless, several speakers questioned whether the statistics fully and accurately

reflected either the Council's productivity or persistently heavy workload. One noted that members had to address Council business every day. Both meetings and statements were getting longer. In addition to at least four formal meetings a week, there were various informal meetings and consultations. Though open meetings may register as a single meeting, they often extend into day-long events. Moreover, this participant did not foresee the frequency of meetings declining, given continuing high demand for peacekeeping. Another member added that, according to his calculations, he had spent over 550 hours in the Council since his country was elected a member at the beginning of the year. In his view, the statistics cannot capture all the preparatory work and consultations involved in drafting documents for meetings and resolutions.

Similarly, it would be misleading to consider only formal meetings, emphasized another speaker, given the frequent meetings of sanctions committees, informal discussions outside the Council chamber and its informal consultations room, and discussions with other interlocutors. An example of the latter were the extensive discussions with the African Union mission that came to New York to discuss the indictment by the International Criminal Court of the President of the Sudan, Omar al-Bashir. In this participant's view, it was likely that a better sense of Council activities could be gained from looking at the time frame used for the annual Security Council report to the General Assembly (1 August to 31 July). Incoming members were advised to prepare for hard work and late hours over the coming two years.

Several discussants expressed concern that the body had become "a prisoner of too much business", with the dizzying pace of work and meetings leaving too little time for reflection or for strategic planning. As one participant put it, while the Council was designed to focus on "hotspots" that could threaten international peace and security, its agenda had become burdened with too many thematic issues. This tendency, he felt, would affect both the focus and efficiency of the Council. Another speaker agreed, adding that the Council was suffering from agenda "obesity", as it was taking on issues beyond its Charter-designated role. In its zeal to address so many issues, the Council, he cautioned, was "losing control of its appetite". On the other hand, a third speaker noted, there were in fact new threats to international peace and security, such as international drug trafficking and organized crime, that called for "new thinking and debate" in the Council.

Did the reduction of meetings and outcomes reflect an increase in the Council's efficiency or a decrease in its workload? asked one interlocutor. Either way, noted another, instead of focusing on quantitative indicators, such as numbers of presidential statements and resolutions, it would be better to try to develop parameters or indicators for measuring the Council's effectiveness in addressing threats to international peace and security. In that regard, one speaker stressed that the Council should empower people on the ground, instead of usurping their authority to tackle issues in their country or even competing with them. It was no wonder, he commented, that peacekeeping mandates often did not succeed or that sustainable peace was not achieved.

The participants also highlighted the Council's increasing tendency to operate by consensus. As one speaker noted, though there was no legal difference between resolutions adopted by majority vote and those adopted unanimously, he could not recall a split as large as 9 to 6 in Council votes. As the background paper had

pointed out, the premium on gaining consensus could give each member — permanent and non-permanent alike — greater voice and leverage in the negotiation of the texts of resolutions. However, the desire for unanimity, several speakers pointed out, could also increase the pressure on some members to go along with the majority. This sometimes happens, for instance, when "pre-cooked" drafts are put forward by small or external groups of States, such as a Group of Friends, that lobby Council members for their support. As one discussant observed, although the vast majority of resolutions in recent years were adopted unanimously, members were still continuously engaged in a process of trying to gauge which way the required majority of nine members would go and of then aligning their votes accordingly. Building consensus was no easy task, cautioned another speaker. He urged outgoing members to carry away a message to the wider United Nations membership that it was hard enough to conduct business with 15 Council members. Some modes of Council reform that were currently under discussion would make the business of the Council very difficult, or even impossible, he said.

Interactions with the Secretariat could be useful in developing a common information base for Council decision-making. According to several speakers, in that regard working lunches with the Secretary-General had proved particularly useful, providing opportunities for Council members to get a near-instant response from the Secretary-General on issues before the Council. Moreover, there was broad appreciation for the increasing engagement among the Council, the Secretariat, and regional and subregional organizations, a topic addressed in more detail below.

Growth and evolution of peacekeeping mandates and operations

Looking ahead, participants generally agreed that a continued high or even growing demand for United Nations peacekeeping operations would be a defining feature of the Council's agenda in coming years. International capacities — whether in terms of funding, troops, police or civilians — will continue to be severely strained. Several participants voiced concern that some countries were becoming "chronic beneficiaries" of peacekeeping operations, undermining local authority and capacity. Among the examples cited were Haiti, which has hosted mission after mission without a sustainable solution to its fundamental problems, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, site of the largest peacekeeping operation but of little political, economic or security progress in four decades. To illustrate the point, one speaker noted that the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, had been a peacekeeper in the Congo in the early 1960s.

Among the factors limiting the successful planning and completion of peacekeeping operations, noted several speakers, was the lack of analytical capacity at the United Nations to address the root causes of conflicts. As one participant noted, the United Nations often approached peacekeeping operations with a "standard package of solutions", whose impacts were not always fully understood and which often failed to take into account the voices of key local stakeholders in host countries. The United Nations should play a secondary or even tertiary role, he continued, to allow local populations to take the lead in finding sustainable solutions to armed conflict. Moreover, added another speaker, host countries were not sufficiently consulted regarding planned operations, nor were other United Nations organs or groups, such as the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly. He acknowledged that the Council is now taking greater account of the views of regional and subregional bodies, including

through the annual meeting of its members with the members of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. But he urged that more be done to make communications with these partners more timely and reliable.

Noting the intractable nature of several of the conflicts referred to the Council, one discussant observed that it had become like a "trauma centre" in a hospital: when cases proved too difficult to resolve in other forums, they were brought to the Council. Although neighbouring countries and regional and subregional organizations often have an interest in preventing the escalation of conflict, he continued, the United Nations is usually not their first conflict resolution option. As a result, too often Council members were faced with finding remedial, rather than preventive, solutions. As a consequence, added another participant, the Council tends to rush into action, taking decisions that are "not always thoughtful". This tendency, in his view, compromised the Council's effectiveness, as well as its ability to prepare adequately for peacekeeping missions. As another interlocutor put it, it would be helpful if the Council could apply lessons learned from earlier peacekeeping missions to make future ones more effective.

One participant commented that he could not recall a peacekeeping mandate for which the Council had, in advance of its authorization, asked the Secretariat what the expected costs would be, where the troops would come from, how the Council could help to resolve the crisis between the conflicting parties, or how the operation would affect the political landscape. Unless the Council had such objective and candid assessments when it was defining and shaping a peacekeeping mandate, there was a risk of the resulting mission becoming a "part of the landscape" and being automatically extended because Council members feared that the situation could dissolve should the operation be withdrawn. Concurring with these comments, another speaker noted that peacekeepers were often sent into situations where there was no peace to keep. In such cases, he observed, it was difficult for the Council to transform its role from "conflict regulation" to "conflict resolution".

Draft resolutions and mandates have been increasing in length and in the number of demands they place upon peacekeeping operations, it was noted, leaving commanders in the field confused about priorities and exit strategies. The mandate for MONUC, for example, includes 41 distinct tasks. One participant recalled an anecdote about the evolving views of a diplomat who once served on the Council, but now serves in the field in Africa. In the Council, this delegate had often pushed for more expansive mandates, but now seeing these matters from a field perspective, he appreciated the need for more concise and focused mandates.

The relationship among prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding was addressed from several perspectives. The growing emphasis on prevention and peacebuilding in the United Nations work was widely welcomed. Some speakers commended Secretariat efforts to place more emphasis on preventive diplomacy, including recently in Guinea and Madagascar. As one participant put it, through mediation, conflicts could be "nipped in the bud" and the need for peacekeeping operations significantly lessened. One discussant observed that preventive diplomacy was more a role for the Secretariat, as opposed to the Council, and that the Council should encourage it to be more active in this sphere. Another participant countered, however, that preventive diplomacy was in fact a Charter-based role of the Council also, with the Secretariat often acting as the implementer of what the

Council had decided. When, for instance, the Council highlighted the importance of preventive diplomacy, mediation and peacebuilding, the Secretariat should act accordingly, given that the two bodies were complementary.

Concurring that peacebuilding was an important tool, one speaker contended that the Council did not do it very well. In peacebuilding, the Council's role was more supportive than operational. With the help of various players, peacebuilding succeeded in Burundi and elsewhere. Citing the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti as an example, another participant commented that, while peacekeeping can often create the environment needed for a country to move forward, to do so often required the investment of more resources in statebuilding and peacebuilding. This discussant asked, however, how peacebuilding initiatives might be introduced in circumstances where there was no peace operation deployed on the ground. According to one speaker, peacekeeping missions strive to create conditions for a political solution to take root, to "regulate" conflict, whereas peacebuilding initiatives focus more on conflict "resolution". The Council, he observed, with its Chapter VII enforcement powers, focused more on peacekeeping and thus on creating the right conditions for peacebuilding. The latter, however, was an important tool in preventing a fallback into conflict conditions. In that light, he saw the forthcoming review of the Peacebuilding Commission as a promising opportunity to reassess the relationship between the two functions. The Commission, observed another interlocutor, had been useful in establishing stability in countries where there was no peacekeeping force on the ground.

Greater cooperation with regional and subregional arrangements, including the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

Citing United Nations engagement with regional and subregional organizations, one participant commended the Council's work with the Organization of American States on Haiti and Honduras, with the Southern African Development Community on Madagascar, and with the African Union on a range of issues on that continent. Regional and subregional organizations had a "special understanding" of the complexities of situations within their own region, and they could be instrumental in resolving outstanding political problems. In the view of this discussant, "directly relating" to the affected populations could help officials at United Nations Headquarters to better understand their views. As an example, recent Council missions to Haiti, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Addis Ababa — where members of the Council mission met with members of the African Union Peace and Security Council — included significant interaction between Council members and the people on the ground. Given that the bulk of Council time was spent on African issues, the discussant noted that the regional organization that most often sought Council engagement was the African Union. Offering a "cautionary note", however, this participant emphasized that the Council and regional organizations were "different beasts" that, while complementing each other, were not very successful when one tried to substitute for the other. It was observed that Council decisions more and more took into account the views of regional organizations. Yet, cautioned another speaker, the relationship between the Council and regional organizations had not yet reached a level of "total confidence", and regional organizations and the Council had not yet developed an efficient formula for working together. On this subject, it was suggested that there had been some differences of opinion among elected and permanent members of the Council.

According to one participant, the Council had not sufficiently taken into account the views of the African Union. He urged that recommendations in the Secretary-General's reports on the region be agreed in advance between the secretariats of the United Nations and the African Union.

Another speaker strongly disagreed, contending that there was no reason for formal meetings or documents to be exchanged between the United Nations and the African Union and that the Secretariat should not have to "clear" recommendations with the African Union before they appeared in reports of the Secretary-General. Another participant, while welcoming the deepening relationship between the Council and regional bodies, agreed that regional organizations should not be regarded as "clearing houses" for the Secretary-General and the Security Council. The Council, of course, had very special responsibilities under the Charter. In his view, the mixed experience of UNAMID had demonstrated that there is no substitute for the Council's authority. Another participant disagreed, noting that, although the process had not been "pretty", UNAMID appeared to have made some contributions to diminishing violence in the region.

Looking ahead

Several participants commented on the ongoing struggle within the Council to reconcile principles and interests. This could be seen, it was said, in how the Council interprets what constitutes a threat to international peace and security. There were several instances of armed conflict and violence around the world that had not made their way on to the Council's agenda, observed one speaker, as they were not considered to be threats to international peace and security. Yet they affected large numbers of people and raised questions in the public mind about why the Council had not acted. The Council should develop a clearer set of guidelines about when to act in a given conflict, he suggested. This was particularly important given the appearance of new threats and challenges, such as drugs and organized crime, on the Council's agenda, added another speaker.

In the view of one of the discussants, the Council had not been sufficiently predictable in its responses, as narrow political interests too often shaped responses that should be based on broad normative principles. For example, he observed that some members wanted to defer a referral of President Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court on political grounds, to allow more time for the resolution of conflicts in the region, while others were pushing for a referral of Israel and Hamas to the Court on the basis of the findings of the Goldstone report. Concurring, a second speaker declared that principles were more important and sustainable than politics, while a third one added that some principles are universally accepted and that the elected members could help to shape the Council's actions accordingly.

Another participant, stressing that the Council was not an academic body, strongly disagreed. It was, in his words, a heavily "political animal". It worked under constant pressure from the domestic front, regional political considerations, non-governmental organizations, and the media. It should be no surprise, he commented, that the Council does not react with consistency to each case before it. Each case, in his view, is sui generis and should be evaluated on its unique history and circumstances. One of the principal reasons the Council had been effective, he asserted, was its ability to judge each challenge on a case-by-case basis. The day it

lost that ability, he posited, it would cease to be effective. According to another speaker, navigating between these two divergent perspectives would continue to be a challenge for the Council in the coming years.

Over the course of the discussions, a number of challenges that would face the incoming class of Council members over the next two years were cited. African issues would again be prominent and occupy much of the Council's time. These would include: the MONUC transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; grappling for a way forward in the Sudan, where elections were scheduled in 2010 and a referendum in 2011; governance questions in West Africa; and Somalia and the role of the African Union Mission in Somalia. Outside Africa, a speaker contended, the Council had not discussed Afghanistan "as much as it should", and it would be crucial to strengthen the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Additionally, the Council would need to review the cases of Cyprus and Nepal, where exit strategies should be considered. The Council, it was pointed out, would also need to find a more constructive role to play in supporting peaceful resolutions to the conflicts in the Middle East. Other priority issues facing the Council would be non-proliferation issues related to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the relationship among peacekeeping, peacebuilding and mediation. According to another participant, the Goldstone report could pose a challenge during this period also.

Session II
Working methods

Moderator:

Ambassador Yukio Takasu
Permanent Representative of Japan

Commentators:

Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan
Permanent Representative of Turkey

Ambassador Liu Zhenmin
Deputy Permanent Representative of China

At this session, current members provided both an overview of the Council's working methods and some suggestions about how they might be improved. Among the items discussed were the structure and format of meetings and consultations, the relationship between the Council and various interlocutors, and the responsibilities of the President.

Perspectives on Council working methods

One participant highlighted two points from Professor Luck's background paper. The first described the Security Council as "the most adaptable of United Nations organs", while the second emphasized that a change in working methods was not an end in itself. With these points in mind, the speaker posited that many of the changes needed in Council working methods had been outlined in the note by the President distributed in July 2006 (S/2006/507). There was wide convergence around the table during this session, he observed, that everything that was needed to

be said was encapsulated in this paper. In his view, the problem was not identifying what needs to be done, but how to do it. Noting that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions was currently reviewing the note to determine what had and had not been implemented, a discussant urged all participants to read it carefully.

Asserting that there is a unique culture of working methods in the Council, and that generations might be needed to change that culture, some participants stressed that the only way to succeed is to persist in implementing the changes. Once an improvement is made, for instance, it should be exercised repeatedly, as progress in working methods has sometimes been lost over time through disuse. As an example, the speaker recalled the 2002 annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, the introduction to which had been prepared by the delegation of Singapore (then a Council member). That introduction was quite analytical and interesting, but, to his regret, in later years the Council went back to the same old style of reporting.

As another discussant put it, there did not need to be a revolution in working methods, as the Council was the master of its own procedures. He added, however, that the Council should not ignore the fact that the wider membership had a particular interest in Council working methods. In this respect, he recalled the open debate held in August 2008 on the implementation of S/2006/507, where many non-members had taken the floor and called for more transparency, efficiency, accountability, legitimacy and respect in the workings of the Council.

Several speakers commented on the need to find the right balance among effectiveness, transparency and efficiency in the work of the Council. It was important, one participant observed, to consider how the Council was perceived by external audiences. The analyses of the Council that he had reviewed repeatedly mentioned the issues of democracy, legitimacy and legality — or lack thereof — in commenting on the Council's working methods. Other Member States and the public alike expect proper deliberation and reasoned argumentation as the Council addresses important issues. The legitimacy of the Council, noted another discussant, was derived largely from the respect that United Nations Members have for it. It therefore was incumbent upon its members to ensure that its working methods enabled the Council to earn the confidence of the broader United Nations membership and the global public.

Commenting on the trade-off between transparency and efficiency, one participant noted that, while having too many formal meetings could affect efficiency, it was good for transparency. According to another speaker, while there had been good progress on transparency, with more open meetings and more access to information, the very nature of the Council was to be a quasi-executive body, unlike the General Assembly. This meant that the main goal of the Council should be efficiency, not transparency. More transparency was useful, but sometimes less transparency meant more efficiency.

According to one discussant, the Peacebuilding Commission could provide some valuable lessons on successful working methods. Among these, he noted that the Commission's work is largely country-specific and therefore is more focused, that it has a more "intensive presence" in the field, that its deliberations tend to be more informal, and that it always involves the countries concerned when developing country strategies and plans. The heads of the Commission's country-specific

configurations made regular visits to the field, and the Commission was also more effective in the way it engaged with stakeholders. However, another speaker observed, though it was sometimes useful for a few "interested countries" in the Council to take the lead on a particular issue, in practice it often meant that other members were presented with draft documents in which they had little input.

Though there were advantages to maintaining some flexibility in meeting forecasts, one discussant complained that the Council's rules of procedures were still dubbed "provisional" more than 60 years after the founding of the world body. He suggested that members move to formalize their agreement on the rules, or else discard them altogether. Another participant strongly disagreed, declaring that attempts to modify working methods had become a "side show" to the more important business of the Council. Whether or not they were called "provisional", they were still regarded as the body's formal operating guidelines. According to another discussant, the role of the Council had changed, as its decisions now affected international law, with the Council becoming a quasi-judicial or quasi-legislative body. This was why the Council needed to always act with the best available information and also with a sense of proportionality.

Several participants commented on the tendency for permanent and non-permanent members to view questions about Council working methods from different perspectives. According to some discussants, the permanent members have the advantage of a longer institutional memory and closer working relationships with external partners developed over the years. To compensate, one speaker urged the newly elected members to develop strong working relationships with the Secretariat, which had deep and authoritative knowledge of the Council's past and current practices. A second participant suggested that a thorough understanding of the Council's rules of procedure and working methods would empower elected members when engaging with the permanent ones. The unity of the permanent members on some matters was quite impressive, according to one discussant. In response, another speaker commented that the five permanent members most readily cooperated on institutional issues because their longer-term perspectives tended to place a high value on precedence and orderly procedure. As a number of participants stressed, the annual "Hitting the Ground Running" workshop was designed, in part, to enable newly elected members to integrate more successfully with current Council members by familiarizing themselves with its working methods and culture prior to beginning their term. Several of them also commented that, despite distinct perspectives on some matters, all members of the Council enjoyed remarkably good working relationships marked by a high level of camaraderie, cooperation and professionalism.

Meetings and consultations

There was wide agreement among participants at the workshop that the large number of Council meetings and consultations places a heavy burden on member delegations. This was ascribed, in part, to longer meetings at which all members felt obligated to make a statement, regardless whether the issue in question was a matter of national interest, because their silence could be misinterpreted. Moreover, open debates tended to become day-long events so as to accommodate all interested parties. As a result, there was a widely supported call for more informal and consultative meetings.

According to one participant, it was impossible to have interactive, short and to-the-point discussions at an open meeting, as the public forums were designed for expressing positions, not for discussing them. The same speaker noted that history had demonstrated that the more open the debates and the more the participation of non-members, the less effective the Council was and the less interaction members had among themselves. Another discussant suggested that the newly elected Council members would be surprised how often Council members make statements in consultations that could have been made publicly. The speaker opined that the culture of secrecy in the Council had pushed members to go to consultations to hear the same thing they would at an open meeting. The more the Council worked behind closed doors, moreover, the more its legitimacy suffered.

To encourage more interactive consultations, one participant suggested that remarks be shorter and less formal. Another urged members to consider not making statements on issues that do not affect their existing national interests. As in past "Hitting the Ground Running" workshops, the tendency of Council members to read prepared statements in informal consultations was lamented. In that context, one speaker suggested requesting the presidency to raise particular questions for discussion, so that they could be addressed directly in member interventions. In contrast, another discussant cautioned that, while he supported making consultations more interactive and remarks shorter, realistically it was sometimes difficult to avoid the use of written statements. This was particularly so with new issues, on which members needed to prepare themselves more thoroughly. Another participant, acknowledging the difficulties in moving away from written interventions, suggested that statements could be at least shortened and that Permanent Representatives work closely with their staff on reducing the length of prepared speeches. Finally, one interlocutor noted that the workload that members put on themselves also contributed to the lack of interactivity since written statements were safer and easier to prepare.

Other recommendations included cutting the number of meetings dedicated to reporting requirements or, alternatively, delegating them to experts to relieve some pressure on Permanent Representatives and other high-ranking diplomats. Participants noted with appreciation the use of an "informal interactive dialogue" in the case of Sri Lanka, a new format in which Council members can meet privately with relevant parties to an issue without placing it on the formal agenda. The result was a blunt, candid and productive exchange of views on developments in that country.

In one speaker's view, the word "respect" was critical when talking about working methods. He recalled that one of his delegation's first challenges on working methods was at a meeting at which the Council voted on a draft resolution imposing sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iranian representative was slated to speak last at the meeting. The speaker's delegation, however, thought that it was a matter of respect to permit the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to speak before the adoption of the resolution and before the Council members made statements explaining their votes. In the end, another Council delegation negotiated a formula by which all of the Permanent Representatives of Council members would remain until the end of the meeting to hear the Iranian statement, as opposed to exiting the Chamber upon making their respective interventions.

Pointing out that open meetings and open debates were needed for accountability, a speaker complained that after the 15 Council members had spoken and non-members took the floor the room was often half-empty, with only low-level representatives sitting at the Council table and in the Chamber. Thus, while open debates were supposed to be a good way to hear the opinions of non-members of the Council, he questioned whether such poorly attended meetings helped to address this concern. Commenting on the format of meetings and participation, one interlocutor observed that those two issues were clearly laid out in the provisional rules of procedure and that all meetings were open unless otherwise decided. This speaker criticized instances where directly interested countries could not participate in discussions, where consultations were held so that criticism of a State would not be public, or where open meetings were used so that criticism could be aired publicly. He hoped that in the future, when the Council was deciding whether a meeting should be public or not, national interests of this sort would not influence members' decisions on formats.

Relationship of the Council with various interlocutors

As several discussants pointed out, the perception of the legitimacy and legality of Council actions is affected by the quality of the relationship it enjoys with varied interlocutors, including the press, civil society and the broader United Nations membership. Particular attention, it was suggested, should be paid to troop- and police-contributing countries and to States particularly interested in, or affected by, specific situations on the Council's agenda. The increasing demand for and the growing complexity and lethality of peace operations have prompted troop- and police-contributing countries and other Member States to seek closer engagement with the Council, especially in the early stages of discussions regarding possible peacekeeping missions, as well as participation in meetings of the Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations.

Several speakers commended the Council's growing engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries, but called for further steps in that direction. While acknowledging the need to have more meetings with troop- and police-contributing countries, several participants suggested that the real question was how to improve the effectiveness of the meetings that were held. All participants, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the contributing countries, needed to ensure that they were well prepared and focused, knowing what issues they wanted to discuss. It was also suggested that the Secretariat should be encouraged to bring up pending issues in advance of the meetings to help facilitate the dialogue. Similarly, another speaker stated that it would be useful if questions were provided beforehand, so that the meetings would be more focused and the Secretariat would be better prepared to react to questions. According to one discussant, the consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries often took place at a point too late in the discussion of possible peacekeeping missions, while another agreed that interaction with contributing countries should be more "systematic, intensive and upstream". It was suggested that the Council consider sharing draft resolutions with troop- and police-contributing countries, so that they could make contributions to the text during the negotiations process. Such a two-way flow of information would enable members to make more informed decisions about situations requiring Council action.

There was discussion, as well, of the use of "15+1" meetings between Council members and a concerned party, giving members the opportunity to listen to the other side of the story. In this context, some speakers encouraged the more frequent use of informal meetings with the countries concerned. Employment of this format was also seen as a positive response to concerns of the broader membership regarding opportunities to contribute to Council debates of particular relevance to their interests. In the view of another speaker, it could be helpful, as well, for the host countries of peace operations to become more involved in deliberations on missions and mandates, so as to contribute their perspectives and specialized knowledge towards enhancing the Council's analytical and operational capacities. Arria-formula meetings were also cited as a vehicle for more informal and frequent engagement with experts and the broader membership.

As one participant observed, the credibility of the Council was tied to its accountability to Member States. For example, he noted, when States not members of the Council asked why the Council chose to intervene in certain situations and not others, Council members should be able to respond. In line with this view, a second speaker pointed out that, though the Security Council was not formally responsible to the General Assembly, it was responsible to the full membership for the maintenance of international peace and security. Consequently, as the General Assembly represents the full United Nations membership, he called for greater interaction and cooperation among the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council. Another discussant called for more regular meetings among the Presidents of the three bodies. He suggested that they be invited to the Council's working lunches with the Secretary-General, at the latter's discretion.

Though some participants urged greater engagement with the media and civil society, one speaker pointed out that there was an inherent contradiction in pushing for briefer and more focused meetings, while at the same time advocating for increasing the number of participants and the informality of the discussions. If a consultation room was filled with the media or non-governmental organizations, he pointed out, it would become a forum where Member States felt obligated to state formalized positions. The more non-members participate in its work, the less interactive the Council would become, he contended, and the less work it would get done.

The responsibilities of the President

Several speakers commented on the roles and responsibilities of the President of the Council. It could, they emphasized, be a particularly challenging and rewarding moment for an elected member. But it is no easy task. The President of the Security Council, observed one participant, had to serve as convener of the Council, "speaker of the house", and master of procedures. The President was expected to encourage members to reach a consensus whenever possible. The public role as speaker of the house was said to be particularly difficult in that Presidents needed to reach out to the media and objectively articulate and convey the state of play among members on the many issues before the Council. This task was made that much more difficult, another discussant complained, when some Permanent Representatives at times step out of the Council chamber during sessions to engage with the press and then return to shape the outcome. Such behaviour undermines the President's capacity to act as spokesperson for the Council. It would be better

practice to let the President be the first to meet the press to relate the cumulative sentiments of the Council's members as a whole.

Addressing such concerns, one speaker recommended that Presidents be given greater flexibility in terms of speaking to the media and more leeway in shaping the Council's interactions with non-members. In the latter case, the President would determine the participation of non-members in consultations that particularly affect them. In addition, this discussant suggested that Presidents be allowed to organize a briefing for States not members of the Council, which would take place at the conclusion of each presidency.

Given the concerns voiced during the first session regarding the length of Council meetings and deliberations, one participant noted that presidential statements are also growing. As another speaker put it, though the number of statements may be declining, their word count seems to be expanding. The value of presidential statements, one discussant reminded other participants, derived not from their length but from their specificity and concreteness. He urged them, therefore, to draft briefer and more focused texts when called upon to deliver a presidential statement.

Session III
Security Council missions, committees and working groups

Moderator:

Ambassador Claude Heller
Permanent Representative of Mexico

Commentators:

Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting
Permanent Representative of Austria

Minister Counsellor Nicolas de Rivière
Deputy Permanent Representative of France

At the outset, it was noted that Security Council subsidiary bodies play an increasingly central normative role, as they address core thematic issues, such as terrorism and peacekeeping. There was also a call for more discussion of the precise nature of the Security Council's relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition to addressing the growing role of Security Council committees and panels of experts, session III considered the basic characteristics, benefits and challenges of Security Council missions to the field.

Security Council missions

Several participants agreed that Security Council missions to the field are useful in providing first-hand impressions of local conditions, and give Council members a more hands-on feel for the actual results of their work at Headquarters. They offer an opportunity to meet Heads of State, parties to conflicts, representatives of civil society, and other local actors, as well as officials of regional and subregional organizations. One speaker, for example, suggested that, as a result of his trips to Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Council, he

gained a better understanding of banditry in Cité Soleil, human rights problems in Goma, and the perspectives of President Kabila and senators in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another participant added that such missions make Council members more aware of the implications of the decisions being made in New York.

Council missions also allow members to gain a better understanding of the workings of peacekeeping operations. As such missions have become more central to the work of the Council, they have attracted a higher level of press coverage. Mission participants are able to meet with interlocutors at the highest level, enabling them to deliver messages and to push directly for the implementation of Council decisions. Council missions, according to one speaker, also offer a good bonding experience with other Council members and allow them to gain a deeper understanding of the positions and perceptions of their colleagues, as well as of parties to the conflict.

The impact of such missions on the host countries was also raised as a matter of concern. One speaker suggested that, while interaction with the field is useful, missions sometimes undermine local capacities and do not include all the key stakeholders in the process of finding sustainable solutions to armed conflicts. Missions, therefore, should strive to support the needs of people on the ground. Likewise, one participant suggested that the Council do a better job of informing host countries about the objectives of the mission, so that meetings during these trips can be more constructive. It was also recommended that mission delegations do a better job of communicating Security Council messages — including its values, norms and expectations — when in host countries. Urging that missions be better planned by Council members, another discussant suggested that countries to be visited should be informed well in advance of the Council's intention to visit and that everything be done to ensure that all meetings with interlocutors take place as planned. To ensure more informed discussions back in New York on the substance of Security Council missions, one participant underlined that it would be helpful if mission reports are translated into all of the official languages before consultations on the issues raised in them are held.

On the modalities of Council missions, it was noted that each mission has specific terms of reference that have been negotiated in advance at Headquarters at the level of experts. In instances when the Council visits several countries on a single mission, each leg of the trip has its specific terms of reference. Each mission has a head, who is typically the Ambassador of the delegation that coordinated the issue for the Council in New York. At times, there have been several mission heads on the same trip when several countries were visited.

On organizing missions, the Secretariat facilitates the funding of the missions and assists in preparing the programme of meetings and in providing administrative arrangements for participants. One speaker noted that usually there is one participant from each Council member, although smaller missions have been organized in the past. The head of the mission usually brings along one expert, at her/his delegation's expense, while others usually travel unaccompanied. In response to a complaint from a participant about why some Ambassadors are allowed to bring an expert while others are not, another explained that in the past, when logistical arrangements permitted, Ambassadors could bring one expert at their delegation's expense. Council missions are usually planned well in advance by political coordinators, although some missions have been organized at very short

notice. For example, the Council mission in 2007 in connection with the Kosovo issue was organized in just two weeks.

As a rule, the Council visits countries and regions that appear on its agenda, with countries in Africa remaining the primary destination. One speaker commented on the need to carefully balance the programme of missions, citing an example when the Council spent three days each in Haiti and in Afghanistan, while visiting five countries in Africa in the course of a week. A second discussant suggested that, given the large United Nations presence in Africa, an annual visit to West Africa and the Great Lakes region would be a good idea. A third participant, on the other hand, recommended a Council mission to Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, or somewhere else in Asia in 2010, since the Council did not visit an Asian country in 2009.

Sanctions committees and other subsidiary bodies

Several speakers emphasized the large workload of Security Council committees. For non-permanent members, chairing almost all of the subsidiary bodies is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it gives them an opportunity to play leadership roles on critical issues. On the other hand, as one participant joked, it may be a clever way of keeping the elected members fully occupied. Citing the heavy workload and the need to meet various timelines, two participants characterized such work as challenging, yet rewarding. Another participant described sanctions committee work as usually being quiet, though punctuated by periods of heightened activity. There are deadlines for committee (and panel of expert) reports that need to be respected. Some committees have weekly meetings of a laborious nature. The Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban was cited as one example. It was also noted that the work of committees cannot be divorced from the political context in which they operate. Committees that seem to be dormant can suddenly become active, depending upon events. For example, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), focusing on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was relatively inactive for some time, has witnessed a resurgence of activity in recent months in response to missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Likewise, gun violence in the Sudan focuses attention on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, which oversees an arms embargo.

One discussant highlighted the roles and responsibilities of committee Chairs. To chair a committee effectively, he commented, one must enjoy working with young people. Except for the Chair, delegations are typically represented by hardworking and ambitious junior to mid-ranking diplomats. He encouraged other Permanent Representatives to nominate able junior staff, as it is important to have excellent collaborators in the substantive discussions of the committees. As an example, the speaker pointed to the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). Noting that each case addressed by the committee is unique, he stressed that analysing them required a strong knowledge of due process and the rule of law. It could be helpful, also, if committee Chairs could develop a working relationship with countries that are the object of a committee's work, since a functioning relationship would permit regular information exchanges. Moreover, if experts are forbidden to travel to the countries under sanctions because their visa applications are denied, the Chair could try to resolve problems directly with the United Nations mission concerned.

Several participants noted that, because the committees operate on the basis of consensus, reaching agreement in them is often more difficult than reaching agreement in the Council. On the other hand, several speakers pointed out that in instances when consensus is difficult to reach in a committee, the Chair has the option of bringing the issue to the level of Ambassadors in the Council. Nevertheless, one participant thought it peculiar that one member at the subsidiary body level could prevent a decision being taken and, in essence, block consideration of the question by the Council proper. Despite the fact that consensus is sometimes hard to achieve, another discussant asserted that the quest is worth it because of the message that unanimity sends on sensitive questions relating to sanctions and the development of norms. Commenting on the working methods of the committees, one participant stressed the need to have the relevant documents translated well in advance of discussing them at subsidiary body meetings. Another spoke about the importance of maintaining good working relationships among the committees, the panels of experts, peacekeeping operations or special political missions, and the Secretariat. It was noted that field missions play an important role in the implementation of Council sanctions.

Groups of experts

There was substantial discussion of the functions of panels of experts, including their relationship to the committees to which they are assigned. Speaking on the role of experts assisting sanctions regimes, as well as the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee, one speaker stressed the need for greater transparency in their selection. In her view, their work needs to be evaluated more closely and the nationalities of panel members should be more representative of the wider United Nations membership. In response, one participant gave the example of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). In that case, the experts, who are selected from around the world, support the Committee intellectually and in their professional capacities. The experts are appointed by the Secretary-General, following consultations with the Committee members. Once experts are appointed, they produce a variety of reports and normally the final report of the panel of experts is made public. At the same time, each committee decides on a case-by-case basis whether it wants to follow the recommendations of its panel of experts. In some cases, experts' reports are contentious and the committee members have distinct evaluations of them. According to one discussant, that was the case with an expert panel report to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan/Darfur. It was evaluated differently by different members of the Committee, so there was no unanimous outcome of the Committee's work.

Session IV
Lessons learned: reflections of the class of 2009

Moderator:

Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom

Commentators:

Ambassador Michel Kafando
Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso

Ambassador Le Luong Minh
Permanent Representative of Viet Nam

Ambassador Jorge Urbina
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica

Ambassador Ranko Vilović
Permanent Representative of Croatia

Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

This concluding session provided representatives of Member States leaving the Council at the end of 2009 with an opportunity to share insights and reflections on their experiences over the past two years. The discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges of serving on the Security Council, the dynamics of the relationship between permanent and elected members, and advice to the incoming class.

Opportunities and challenges

Speakers noted that serving on the Council provides a unique opportunity to have an impact on difficult issues. Among these, terrorism, non-proliferation and peacekeeping were emphasized. It was observed that being a Council member is also an excellent learning opportunity, as one must become knowledgeable on a wide range of peace and security issues affecting the world. One participant also declared that it had been an honour to work on the Council with such high calibre professional diplomats on so many engaging issues. However, it was observed also that entering the Council can initially be a daunting experience, as the weight of culture and tradition is palpable and may hinder one's efforts. One participant likened the experience to raising a first-born child: the parents lack experience and must rely on the help of friends and family, but eventually they get accustomed to the responsibilities. Entering the Council was also compared with the experience of a new government coming into power, as new Council members may have campaigned for many years to be elected, but, upon assuming their new responsibilities, they are acutely aware that they will have to manage a variety of difficult issues.

As one speaker observed, negotiations in the Council can be extremely challenging. When the outcome of a negotiation concerns complex and sensitive issues, he noted, diplomats on the Council must deal with multiple pressures. First, there are time pressures that come into play when a matter is perceived as urgent by some members of the Council. Second, elected members from smaller countries have fewer resources, such as independent sources of information. Consequently, they need to interact more effectively with countries in the region under consideration, as well as with independent organizations, in order to inform their analyses and decisions. Third, there is the need to keep one's Government informed of the Council's deliberations. Fourth, it is important to try to keep the media abreast of negotiations, so that capitals do not provide instructions to their delegations based on inaccurate press reports. Finally, it requires skill to accommodate the position of one's Government with that of other Governments.

Dynamics of the relationship between permanent and non-permanent members

During the course of the session, participants had a lively discussion of the role of the elected members and that of the permanent members in the Council's work. In emphasizing the importance of the distinction, one participant opined that the first and most dangerous idea for newly elected members is that there was no difference between permanent and non-permanent membership. Several members stressed that the simple fact of the enduring nature of the permanent members meant that they have institutional memory that gives them an advantage in procedural matters and substantive negotiations. Noting that one participant had earlier dismissed the issue of working methods as a sideshow, one discussant suggested that this was illustrative of the difference between permanent and non-permanent members. As for the role of the elected members, one participant underlined the importance of remembering that the elected Council members represent those Member States that elected them to be Council members. They would need to strike a balance between reflecting the views of their regions and defending their national interests. Stressing the need for elected members to identify certain issues on which they would focus during their tenures, another speaker noted that, while the elected members might not have a national interest in every item on the Council agenda, the permanent five almost always do.

Nonetheless, several speakers maintained that there is rarely a situation where there is a confrontational mode between permanent and non-permanent members. It was emphasized that on a personal level relations among representatives remain cordial despite political differences. One suggested that it would be absolutely artificial and distorting to see the Council through the lens of permanent versus elected members of the Council, as they all bear collective responsibility for international peace and security. Other speakers urged the elected members to support one another. According to one discussant, if elected members acted collectively, they could affect outcomes, but if they acted separately they could do little. Another speaker maintained that the role of the elected members is very important because they could diminish the tensions between different groups within the Council and help to work towards consensus. The way that coalitions develop among diverse members from different regions is quite interesting, commented one participant. One of the best experiences of being on the Council, in his view, is finding the connections and common causes across regions.

Several speakers emphasized that, without unity among the five permanent members, decisions could not be taken since they have the veto power. One speaker maintained, however, that when one of the permanent five vetoes a draft resolution it is, in fact, helping the Council to make a decision. In the end, though, cooperation among all 15 members is the preferred course of action. Another speaker noted that the Council worked smoothly when the permanent five worked well together. He noted that the permanent five tend to agree on institutional issues, as they see the downside of innovations and change since they have to live with them. This could explain the tension on issues of working methods. One participant commented that his delegation had been impressed by the unity of the permanent five in some cases, such as Western Sahara and the non-proliferation issues regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Another discussant contended, nonetheless, that agreement among the permanent five is the exception, as each of them has its own view on any given issue, and their relationship to the elected members is determined issue by issue. That is why the permanent five formed "alliances" with non-permanent members more often than with each other. Another speaker warned elected members to be very careful in

disagreeing with the permanent five when the latter are unified, unless one is prepared to resist their combined response.

Discussing the practical challenges faced by the elected members, several participants expressed frustration with situations in which a Council member provides a draft resolution or a draft presidential statement for Council action that has been prepared outside the Council. Such drafts are often prepared in cooperation with selected non-members or by so-called Groups of Friends, and then presented to the elected members for their stamp of approval. Such was the case with a draft prepared by the Group of Friends on Western Sahara. In that context, one speaker complained that sometimes the elected members are completely excluded from negotiations, while another observed that often in such situations certain States not members of the Council have more influence than the elected members. It was argued that elected members should be a part of negotiations from the start. Another participant advised elected members to be proactive and to request to be included in negotiations from an early stage. In his experience, if they so requested, they would not be rejected; if they did not ask, they might not be included.

A number of speakers cautioned that achieving their goals in the Council during their elected terms had often been challenging. One speaker noted the frustration in cases where an outcome required consensus and most members had agreed on a draft text. However, with just one member not willing to join the consensus, nothing could be done. Yet, another participant observed, delegations could often obtain their objectives by "horse-trading" and conditioning their support to other members, particularly to the permanent five.

Advice to newly elected members

Several speakers advised incoming Council members to develop strong relationships with multiple actors and to manage those relationships well. First, according to a couple of participants, it is important to have a good relationship with the Secretariat, non-governmental organizations and think tanks, because they can provide knowledge and information to elected members, which lack the institutional memory to compete with the five permanent members. Second, it was suggested that elected members should have a "bullet proof" relationship with their capitals, so that they are in a sufficiently strong position if permanent members voice objections to their respective capitals about their conduct on the Council. It was stressed, also, that elected members should make sure to coordinate their policy approaches with capitals. Third, it was suggested that elected members develop strong relations with both elected and permanent members to prepare themselves for their work on the Council. One participant, however, cautioned elected members not to feel a heightened sense of importance about being on the Council and to be wary of what he called "the courtship of the P-5".

Several speakers identified the Secretariat as a vital source of information for elected members. As elected members do not always have good intelligence about country situations on the Council agenda, they often have to rely on information supplied by the permanent members or by the Secretariat. Another participant specifically praised the usefulness of political and military briefings organized by the Secretariat. Agreeing on the importance of maintaining a functional relationship with the Secretariat, one speaker noted that often the reports produced by the Secretariat were delayed and "watered down" because of the multiple levels of clearance that they underwent. He argued, however, that a good working

relationship with the Secretariat could result in obtaining more candid background information and opinions that have not made it into the final reports.

Closely related to developing and managing relationships, one discussant observed that effective communication with non-members of the Council, the broader policy community, and the public is a key element of a Council member's work. He observed that non-members, non-governmental organizations and think tanks generally crave information about what is going on in the Council, especially during crises. In turn, their work can boost the flow of information and analysis to Council members. For his part, the representative said that he informs members of his country's regional group of the Council's work on a weekly basis, while also striving to provide quality and timely information to other actors outside the Council whenever possible.

Speaking of the need for delegations to set clear goals for their terms on the Council, most speakers advised the new members to choose their priorities carefully, while taking account of their limited resources. Some participants suggested that elected members are generally less driven by their national agendas and better positioned to address some issues impartially. In that context, one discussant suggested that, in the absence of clear national interests, elected members should closely consult the history of their country in order to act on the basis of their national values and the pillars of their national foreign policies. Another speaker urged the newly elected members to build trans-regional alliances on the basis of shared principles and ideas, such as transparency and legitimacy. The outgoing members encouraged the new ones to leave their footprints on the Council and not to be intimated by other members.

It was noted that, for elected members to achieve their goals, they must let the rest of the Council members know what those goals are. They should also gain the support of other Council members prior to bringing any issue to the Council. No Council delegation liked surprises. Initiatives that are not carefully prepared are likely to be "voted down or watered down".

Incoming members were advised to ensure that their missions are staffed with knowledgeable and experienced officers. However, one speaker also emphasized the importance of improvising and husbanding the finite resources at the disposal of most elected members. This should be done according to a clear set of priorities established upon entering the Council. Underlining the value of knowing the Council's procedures to protect the interests of the "weak" in the Council, one discussant encouraged the newly elected members to invest time in studying the provisional rules of procedure. Another speaker highlighted the need to support mission staff through, for example, organizing training sessions for expert level staff.

On a broader strategic level, one participant advised elected members to set clear goals for what they want to accomplish in the Council and to develop an agenda for accomplishing those goals. Elected members, according to another participant, should strive to make it clear to other Council members what they stand for, what their concerns are, and what legacy they want to leave in the Council. However, this same speaker cautioned that elected members should balance their national interests in the Council with the interests of the broader United Nations membership, which elected them to the Council in the first place.